

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A notification system that reconfigures an electronic message to effect an enhanced notification, the system comprising:

an input interface configured to receive at least one electronic message created by or on behalf of a message source for delivery to an intended recipient;

a matching engine configured to determine whether the electronic message corresponds to a predetermined definition of an enhanced notification;

a user information store configured to store information related to the intended recipient; and

an enhancement engine configured to reconfigure the electronic message to the enhanced notification if the information of the user information store indicates that the intended recipient is subscribed to receive the enhanced notification.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the user information store comprises a subscriber engine configured to store subscriber information associated with the intended recipient.

3. The system of claim 2 wherein the subscriber engine is configured further to provide the intended recipient with an opportunity to subscribe to the enhanced notification if the intended recipient is not subscribed already.

4. The system of claim 1 wherein the user information store comprises presence information related to the intended recipient.

5. The system of claim 4 wherein the presence information includes information related to online presence of the intended recipient at a time at which the enhancement engine is preparing to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient.

6. The system of claim 4 wherein the information related to the current online presence of the intended recipient includes information indicating a delivery mechanism associated with the online presence of the intended recipient at a time at which the enhancement engine is preparing to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient.

7. The system of claim 4 wherein the presence information includes information indicating that the intended recipient physically is present within a predefined range of one or more of the delivery mechanisms potentially available to the intended recipient at a time at which the enhancement engine is preparing to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient.

8. The system of claim 1 wherein the predetermined definition of the enhanced notification comprises a system definition.

9. The system of claim 8 wherein the predetermined definition of the enhanced notification further comprises a preference of the intended recipient.

10. The system of claim 1 wherein the predetermined definition of the enhanced notification comprises a data structure configured to accommodate a system definition and a preference of the intended recipient.

11. The system of claim 1 wherein the enhanced notification includes a cascaded delivery definition.

12. The system of claim 11 wherein the cascaded delivery definition lists several delivery mechanisms, and wherein the enhancement engine is configured further to use the presence information to select a delivery mechanism from within the cascaded delivery definition that appears available to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient without significant delay.

13. The system of claim 11 wherein the cascaded delivery definition includes an instant message delivery mechanism.

14. The system of claim 11 wherein the cascaded delivery definition includes an email delivery mechanism.

15. The system of claim 1 wherein the enhanced notification includes a lifespan.

16. The system of claim 15 wherein the lifespan comprises a time period during which information of the enhanced notification reasonably may be expected usefully to inform an action of the intended recipient.

17. The system of claim 15 wherein the enhancement engine is configured further to vacate the enhanced notification provided to the intended recipient when the intended recipient does not access the enhanced notification during the lifespan.

18. The system of claim 15 wherein the enhancement engine is configured further to provide a plurality of instances of the enhanced notification to the intended recipient based on the lifespan and to sense that an instance of the enhanced notification has been accessed by the intended recipient, and, in response, to vacate an instance of the enhanced notification not yet accessed by the intended recipient.

19. The system of claim 1 wherein the enhanced notification is configured to provide the intended recipient with access to the electronic message by interacting with an aspect of the enhanced notification.

20. The system of claim 19 wherein the system is further configured to update or eliminate a related instance of the enhanced notification based on the user interacting with the enhanced notification.

21. The system of claim 1 wherein the matching engine is configured further to match the electronic message to the predetermined definition of the enhanced notification based on a source and a content of the electronic message.

22. The system of claim 1 further comprising a notification archive configured to store a plurality of enhanced notifications and to record historical information related to at least one of the enhanced notifications.

23. A method of reconfiguring an electronic message to effect an enhanced notification, the method comprising:

receiving an electronic message of a first type;

detecting at least one of a message source, a message destination, and message content characteristics;

accessing criteria that is stored and related to at least one of message source, message destination, and message content characteristics;

evaluating whether or not to reconfigure the electronic message as a second type message based on at least one of the message source, the message destination, and the message content characteristics determined; and

reconfiguring the electronic message when one of the message source, the message destination and the message content characteristics match the accessed criteria.

24. The method of claim 23 further comprising:

accessing stored criteria related to a subscriber status;

evaluating whether or not to reconfigure the electronic message as a second type of message based on the determined subscriber status; and

reconfiguring the electronic message only when the subscriber status indicates that an intended recipient of the electronic message is subscribed.

25. The method of claim 23 further comprising:  
determining presence information of an intended recipient; and  
reconfiguring the electronic message based on the presence information of the  
intended recipient.

26. The method of claim 25 further comprising providing the reconfigured message to  
the intended recipient, and wherein the presence information includes information related to  
online presence of the intended recipient at a time that preparation is made to provide the  
enhanced notification to the intended recipient.

27. The method of claim 23 further comprising:  
accessing stored criteria related to a system definition;  
evaluating whether or not to reconfigure the electronic message as a second type  
message based on the determined system definition; and  
reconfiguring the electronic message based on the system definition.

28. The method of claim 23 further comprising:  
accessing stored criteria related to a user preference;  
evaluating whether or not to reconfigure the electronic message as a second type  
message based on the determined user preference; and  
reconfiguring the electronic message based on the user preference.

29. The method of claim 27 wherein the system definition includes a cascaded delivery definition, and reconfiguring comprises reconfiguring the electronic message based on the cascaded delivery definition.

30. The method of claim 29 further comprising providing the reconfigured message to the intended recipient, wherein the cascaded delivery definition lists several delivery mechanisms, and wherein providing the reconfigured message comprises selecting a delivery mechanism from within the cascaded delivery definition that appears available to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient without significant delay.

31. The method of claim 23 wherein reconfiguring the electronic message comprises providing or modifying a lifespan.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein the lifespan comprises a time period during which information of the enhanced notification reasonably may be expected usefully to inform an action of the intended recipient.

33. The method of claim 31 further comprising vacating the reconfigured message when the intended recipient does not access the reconfigured message during the lifespan.

34. The method of claim 31 further comprising:  
providing a plurality of instances of the reconfigured message to the intended recipient based on the lifespan;

sensing that an instance of the reconfigured message has been accessed by the intended recipient; and

vacating an instance of reconfigured message not yet accessed by the intended recipient.

35. The method of claim 17 further comprising:

providing the reconfigured message to the intended recipient; and

providing the intended recipient with access to the original electronic message by interacting with an aspect of the reconfigured message.

36. The method of claim 17 further comprising:

providing the reconfigured message to the intended recipient;

allowing the intended recipient to interact with the reconfigured message; and

updating or eliminating a related instance of the reconfigured message based on the user interacting with the reconfigured message.

37. A computer program stored on a computer readable medium or a propagated signal for reconfiguring an electronic message to effect an enhanced notification, the computer program comprising:

an input code segment that causes a computer to receive at least one electronic message created by or on behalf of a message source for delivery to an intended recipient;

a matching code segment that causes the computer to determine whether the electronic message corresponds to a predetermined definition of an enhanced notification;



a storage code segment that causes the computer to store information related to the intended recipient; and

an enhancement code segment that causes the computer to reconfigure the electronic message to the enhanced notification if the information related to the intended recipient indicates that the intended recipient is subscribed to receive the enhanced notification.

38. The computer program of claim 37 wherein the storage code segment comprises a subscriber code segment that causes the computer to store subscriber information associated with the intended recipient.

39. The computer program of claim 38 wherein the subscriber code segment further causes the computer to provide the intended recipient with an opportunity to subscribe to the enhanced notification if the intended recipient is not subscribed already.

40. The computer program of claim 37 wherein the information related to the intended recipient includes presence information related to the intended recipient.

41. The computer program of claim 40 further comprising a delivery code segment that causes the computer to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient and wherein the presence information includes information related to online presence of the intended recipient at a time at which the computer is preparing to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient.

42. The computer program of claim 41 wherein the information related to the current online presence of the intended recipient includes information indicating a delivery mechanism associated with the online presence of the intended recipient at a time at which the computer is preparing to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient.

43. The computer program of claim 40 wherein the presence information includes information indicating that the intended recipient physically is present within a predefined range of one or more of the delivery mechanisms potentially available to the intended recipient at a time at which the computer is preparing to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient.

44. The computer program of claim 40 further comprising a delivery code segment that causes the computer to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient by using the presence information to deliver the enhanced notification at a delivery mechanism that appears situated to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient without significant delay.

45. The computer program of claim 37 wherein the enhancement code segment further comprises a lifespan code segment that causes the computer to provide a lifespan to the enhanced notification.

46. The computer program of claim 45 wherein the lifespan comprises a time period during which information of the enhanced notification reasonably may be expected usefully to inform an action of the intended recipient.

47. The computer program of claim 45 further comprising:

a delivery code segment that causes the computer to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient; and

a clean-up code that causes the computer to vacate the enhanced notification provided to the intended recipient when the intended recipient does not access the enhanced notification during the lifespan.

48. The computer program of claim 45 further comprising:

a delivery code segment that causes the computer to provide a plurality of instances of the enhanced notification to the intended recipient based on the lifespan; and

a clean-up code segment that causes the computer to sense that an instance of the enhanced notification has been accessed by the intended recipient, and, in response, to vacate an instance of the enhanced notification not yet accessed by the intended recipient.

49. The computer program of claim 37 further comprising:

a delivery code segment that causes the computer to provide the enhanced notification to the intended recipient; and

a clean-up code segment that causes the computer to update or eliminate a message related to the enhanced notification based on detected user interaction with the enhanced notification.